

ECONOMIC DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE

Intelligence Request No. 13
Control No. 2173
25 August 1955

SUBJECT

Possible Soviet Bloc use of Magnesium as Fuel.

REQUESTING AGENCY AND DATE

Bureau of Foreign Commerce; 18 August 1955.

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF INFORMATION

As soon as possible.

PROPOSED USE

To be used by Department of Commerce in connection with a related recommendation pending in the Joint Operating Committee for embargo control of borax.

BACKGROUND AND REFERENCES

1. In JOC Document No. 137, BFC recommends the upgrading to List I of Item 3715 -- Boric Acid and Borates (crude and refined). In JOC Document 137, Supplement I, BFC reports Defense Department information regarding the development by the air force and the Navy of high energy fuels from certain forms of borax for use as jet and rocket fuels.

2. It now appears that certain forms of magnesium are a possible equivalent of borax for use as a jet fuel. In connection with the approaching consideration of the borax documents it seems advisable to fill in the picture by an attempt to determine whether the Soviet Bloc is using magnesium as a jet fuel or as a propellant, and if so, what forms of magnesium are being so used.

3. Whether or not it is possible to obtain the information requested in paragraph 2 above in regard to possible Soviet use of magnesium as a high energy fuel, it appears desirable to bring up to date the intelligence data on magnesium contained in the BFC Fact Sheet, "FS No. 103, Distribution in accordance with JOC Doc. No. 1", dated

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April 6, 1954. A copy of this Fact Sheet is transmitted herewith for your convenience. You may also wish to refer to JOC Document No. 1/2655, of April 12, 1955 which reports that electric power is a limiting factor in Bloc production of magnesium despite the Bloc's inexhaustible source of supply, mainly sea water.

4. Magnesium and magnesium base alloys in numerous forms formerly were covered by Item 2655 on the international list. In the list review last year the U.K. originally recommended complete deletion of the item, and the U.S. originally recommended downgrading to List III. The negotiations concluded with COCOM acceptance of the present split-up of the definition — part being upgraded to Item 1654, and part being downgraded to Item 3654.

ACTION DESIRED

The above request is circulated for the consideration of EDIC members. It is requested that EDIC members submit their recommendations as to agency participation in this project prior to 31 August.

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Acting Executive Secretary

Attachment
"FS No. 103"

Distribution
Cat. D - (All)